



KING COTTON

AN  
ALLEGORICAL  
PAGEANT



BY

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*Jefferson*  
*President of Brenau College*

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# KING COTTON

## AN ALLEGORICAL PAGEANT

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### PROLOGUE

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- ACT I The Court of King Cotton.  
ACT II The Garden of the King.  
ACT III The Court of King Cotton.

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### Dramatis Personae

KING COTTON.

QUEEN DIXIE.

PRINCESS PROSPERITY (*their daughter*).

LORD TENANT SYSTEM (*Prime Minister*).

LORD SINGLE CROP (*his son*).

DIVERSIFICATION (*an ill treated prince now in disguise*).

BOLL WEEVIL (*an evil genius*).

SPECULATION (*a fool*).

CAPTAIN OF THE ROYAL GUARD.

LORDS: *Cotton Seed, Cotton Seed Meal, Cotton Seed Hulls,  
Cotton Seed Oil; Mr. Pro Duce More (Fertilizer).*

LADIES: *Maryland, Virginia, etc.*

*A Chemist, Bacteriologist, Pages, Dancers, Farmers,  
Negroes, etc.*

*(The Prologue and First Act take place on a terrace in front of the Royal Palace. The throne of King Cotton has been erected in the rear center of the scene.)*

## PROLOGUE

HERALD: Greeting, good people, and a message from the King who rules this section in which you live.

I come from the good King Cotton who directs me to say that at the sound of the next bugle he will hold his court in this place and receive the petitions and hear the requests of any loyal subjects who desire to have an audience with him.

He will be accompanied by his noble consort, Queen Dixie, her daughter, Princess Prosperity, and all her ladies in waiting, viz., Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas, who, together with the princes of the realm, Lords Cotton Seed, Cotton Seed Meal, Cotton Seed Hulls, Cotton Seed Oil, Mr. Pro Duce More, and others, will review all those companies of loyal men and women who during the past year have devoted themselves particularly to the service of his royal highness.

His Majesty will also receive the representatives of the great nations of the earth who desire to seek his aid in their various enterprises.

In the meantime the Dance of the Cotton Planters.

*(Dance of the Cotton Planters.)*

*(The bugle sounds.)*

HERALD: Give heed, good people! The mighty ruler, the royal benefactor, the best loved product of the South approaches. Behold! The King!

# KING COTTON

## ACT I

### SCENE 1

*(The King, with his retinue, advances and seats himself upon the throne, with Queen Dixie and her daughter, Princess Prosperity, at her side, and her ladies in waiting, pages, etc., appropriately grouped.)*

**KING COTTON:** Greeting to our loyal subjects, and good health and prosperity. We rejoice at this period of our annual visitation to find so many of our loyal subjects present, and each shall have his opportunity to present himself before our royal throne.

But good courtesy requires that we shall first receive those representatives of other powers who seek our royal favor.

Let the royal visitors from afar be admitted to our presence.

*(The bugle sounds, and escorted by court attendants, Uncle Sam and his attendants approach the throne.)*

**THE KING:** Welcome to our court, Uncle Sam. You do us much honor by your presence on this auspicious occasion. We have heard with much pleasure the report of your increasing wealth and fame and prestige among the great peoples of the earth. It has been a source of gratification that we have been able to place at your disposal so much of our resources, and that you have been able to use them so well. Speak—what further favor do you seek at our hands?

**UNCLE SAM:** Sire, I come at the behest of the American people, first of all to thank you in their behalf for your bounty and

generosity in the past. By this means largely we have been able to take an important part in the great world war for the liberties of mankind. You have furnished the basis for the mighty explosives which were used; you have furnished the wings upon which the air men have carried their messages of death and destruction to the enemy; you have sheltered our soldiers in your tents, and clothed them against the wintry blasts. The money which you have furnished has helped to build our ships, to forge our arms and equip our soldiers for our great enterprise abroad. Our people who have stayed at home have been no less blessed by your bounty in the opportunities which you have offered for useful and profitable labor and in the comforts which you have provided for every home.

In behalf of my own people therefore, and in behalf of the other nations here present who have authorized me to speak for them, I again thank you for these bounties of the past.

**KING COTTON:** Well said, Uncle Sam, and very graciously said. It has been our royal pleasure to do the things of which you have so eloquently spoken, and we find our reward sufficient in the appreciation which you have expressed. What is your further wish?

**UNCLE SAM:** Your most gracious Majesty, we recognize in you the most noble and generous and withal the most powerful monarch on earth. Not only in times of war is your help needed, but even more in the blessed years of peace. It is your bounty which supplies the swaddling clothes for the tiny infant, and during every day of life from the cradle to the grave man must look to you for many of his comforts and conveniences. The clothes that he wears, the paper on which he transacts his business and records his deeds, the bed upon which he spends nearly a third of his life, and a hundred other comforts upon which he has learned to depend, are derived largely through your bounty and generosity. And finally when he comes to enter upon the long sleep of death, it is again your generosity which provides the drapery for his couch, the pillow for his head and the garment in which the gentle hands of friends and relatives enshroud him for that long sleep.

In the preparation of these comforts and necessities of life you have provided a means of support for millions of people in our own country and in every great nation of Earth. The industrial communities which you have founded are the happiest and best cared for communities of industry in the world and not only the happiness but the very life itself of millions of people is dependent upon the continuance of your bounty and generosity.

KING COTTON: It indeed affords us pleasure to hear such fine words of praise from the great nations of Earth. We take with satisfaction the part that is our due, but would not forget to direct your attention to the fact that, after all, the blessings which you have detailed are derived from the Great Ruler of the Universe—the giver of all good, without whose help and good providence our poor efforts would be vain indeed. With the continued blessings of this divine providence, it shall be our pleasure to continue our efforts in behalf of the great nations and of humanity.

*(The bugle sounds.)*

HERALD: Great Britain!

*(John Bull and attendants enter.)*

UNCLE SAM: And now, your Majesty, let me present John Bull, the representative of Great Britain, which next to our own country has been the recipient of your greatest bounty.

*(John Bull advances and bows.)*

KING COTTON: A hearty welcome, John Bull, to the realm of King Cotton. We have heard of your wealth and power and of the noble part which you have taken in the great enterprise of humanity.

JOHN BULL: Your most gracious Majesty, I bring you greeting and warm thanks from the people of Great Britain, and beseech a continuance of your royal favor.

*(The bugle sounds.)*

HERALD: France!

*(France and attendants enter.)*

UNCLE SAM: Your Majesty, I present France whose valor and service to humanity are already so well known to you.

KING COTTON: Indeed it is, and a right hearty welcome do we extend the representative of such a chivalrous people. May the lilies bloom ever more gloriously upon the fields of France made forever sacred by the valiant dead who sleep beneath her soil.

FRANCE: I am deeply touched, most noble King, by your generous tribute and my people have been greatly blessed by your generous contribution to our welfare. We thank you and pray for a continuance of your royal favor.

*(Without further words Uncle Sam presents each of the foreign representatives as they are announced by the Herald and enter to the National air.)*

## SCENE 2

*(A messenger rushes in and presents himself before the throne.)*

KING COTTON: Speak, Messenger, what tidings do you bring?

MESSENGER: Your Majesty, an enemy has been discovered in the realm. He has already destroyed many of your subjects, and has threatened to attack your royal person.

*(The King and ladies of the Court start in dismay.)*

KING COTTON: Who is this enemy and whence does he come?

MESSENGER: His name is Boll Weevil, but whence he comes, and the exact method of his attack no one knows.

KING COTTON: Let the Commander of the Royal Guard, and the Chief Scientists of the realm be brought into our presence.



*(The trumpet sounds and Commander of the Guard, a ridiculous figure and a Chemist and a Bacteriologist appear before the throne.)*

KING COTTON: Commander of the Royal Guard, we are informed that a desperate enemy has invaded our realm and threatens to attack our royal person. You will seize this scoundrel and bring him into our presence that he may receive the sentence which his infamy deserves.

You will take with you these men of Science that they may determine his method of attack, whether it be by poison gas, or infectious bacteria, and take such measures as may be necessary to protect our royal person.

*(The Commander and men of Science bow and disappear.)*

SPECULATION: A lack a day  
Hear I pray!  
When in trouble  
Blow a bubble;  
What goes up  
Must come down.  
Kings can sup,  
Why should they frown?

KING COTTON: What meanest thou, fool?

SPECULATION: Nothing risked, nothing won;  
Sire, the fun has just begun.  
When you die,  
Then I eat pie  
And all the world goes merrily.

KING COTTON: Out of my sight, you impudent scoundrel.

*(The fool rushes out, mocking and pursued by some of the attendants.)*

QUEEN DIXIE: My lord, why dost thou allow this fool in thy court? His impudence is insufferable.

KING COTTON: Alas, my dear, the members of my court must have something to divert them, and this poor fool is sometimes diverting, though oft his cunning hath a venomous sting.

### SCENE 3

*(The King, greatly troubled, is in deep thought, walking up and down. The Queen comforts her daughter, Princess Prosperity, who is greatly frightened.)*

QUEEN DIXIE: Do not be alarmed, my child. His Majesty the King, your father and my lord, cannot be harmed, and he and his loyal subjects can protect us all.

KING COTTON: I trust thou art right, my noble Queen. But I am greatly troubled concerning this new report of misfortune in our realm.

*(Enter Lord Tenant System, the Prime Minister, accompanied by his son, Lord Single Crop.)*

TENANT SYSTEM: Your Majesty, I have but now heard the evil tidings concerning this vicious monster, Boll Weevil, and I have hastened to assure your Majesty that proper steps are being taken to capture or destroy the creature.

KING COTTON: Your efforts, my Lord Tenant System, are somewhat delayed. We have already ourselves dispatched the Commander of the Guard and our men of Science on this errand, but all our forces seem to be required and if through your efforts the evil creature is destroyed you may obtain our royal pardon for your error in failing to make adequate defense on our frontiers against such an incursion. Would that our old friend and former Prime Minister, Diversification, were alive. He would have prevented this creature from crossing our borders.

TENANT SYSTEM *(much cast down)*: I pray your Majesty will not judge me too harshly, but come with me into the royal treasury that I may show you some of the results of my administration.

KING COTTON: Let us go at once. We would divert our mind from these evil forebodings.

*(Exeunt King, Lord Tenant System and several attendants.)*

*(Upon his entrance, Lord Single Crop has approached Princess Prosperity, and they have withdrawn a little aside, and appear to be in conversation, he appealingly and she coldly.)*

PRINCESS PROSPERITY: Nay, My Lord, Single Crop may woo but ne'er can wed Prosperity. Thou art comely enough in fair weather, but very sad in foul. I like thee well at high noon, but thou art oft bedraggled in the afternoon and I fear me thou wouldst cut a sorry figure in the shadows of the early dawn.

SINGLE CROP: Be not so cruel, noble Princess, nor treat my ardent wooing with such light disdain.

PRINCESS PROSPERITY: Thy wooing is like thy physiognomy, my lord, very monotonous.

*(The fool has reentered stealthily and has stolen unobserved behind the young couple.)*

SPECULATION: Poor Single Crop, Goes hippity-hop. Come, let us dance! Come, take a chance! Such poor temerity will ne'er enhance Princess Prosperity.

*(The fool, mocking, runs out pursued by Lord Single Crop, and all the ladies and attendants follow.)*

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## ACT II

### SCENE 1

*(Italian Garden—Dance of the Cotton Choppers.)*

*(BOLL WEEVIL—figure of the devil with numerous antennae—appears, slinking behind the shrubs and in different parts of the garden. The Commander of the Guard with gun, the Chemist with insect spray and the Bacteriologist with net are seen searching and making absurd efforts to capture him. He always escapes and mysteriously disappears, appearing again in a different place.)*

*(The Queen, Princess Prosperity and ladies also promenade in the garden and are greatly affrighted at the appearance of Boll Weevil, who again escapes, despite the efforts of the Commander of the Guard.)*

## SCENE 2

*(Princess Prosperity becomes separated from her party, and meets Diversification, a noble looking youth, but poorly clad in farmer's garb.)*

PRINCESS PROSPERITY: Oh, sir, have you seen this dreadful creature, Boll Weevil? I am so affrighted lest he destroy me.

DIVERSIFICATION: Fear not, noble lady, I will protect thee.

PRINCESS PROSPERITY: Oh, thank you; but are you not afraid also?

DIVERSIFICATION: No, noble lady, I fear neither beast nor demon. My arms are strong and I have met and conquered all manner of beasts with this simple blade *(showing a grass hook or small scythe)*.

PRINCESS PROSPERITY: What is thy name?

DIVERSIFICATION: My name, noble lady, is Diversification.

PRINCESS PROSPERITY: And dost thou live in the realm of King Cotton?

DIVERSIFICATION: I was born here, noble lady, and my father before me. My father was a prince of the realm, but in my early youth he was secretly slain by an evil genius whose name was Tenant System. Thanks to a faithful nurse I escaped to wander in foreign lands. There I have contended against all manner of beasts and of evil men. I have passed through dreadful wars and have been in the midst of plague and of pestilence.

PRINCESS PROSPERITY: Alas, poor youth, how you must have suffered!

DIVERSIFICATION: It is true, noble lady, and yet I have learned that it is suffering and disappointment that make us strong. My trials have been many, but I hope the experiences through which I have passed have the better prepared me to render useful service to the Good King Cotton who was my father's friend.

PRINCESS PROSPERITY: Do come with me to my father. I am sure he will rejoice to welcome you to his realm, and that he will speedily restore you to the noble position which is yours by inheritance.

DIVERSIFICATION: Not yet, noble lady, for I have also learned that *service* is the only genuine patent of nobility in the world, and until I have rendered your noble father some service which shall command his favor, I shall ask no favor at his or any man's hands.

PRINCESS PROSPERITY: I perceive that you are not like other men whom I have known, who constantly seek my father's favor.

DIVERSIFICATION: I am like them only, dear lady, in the respect and homage which I feel for your royal highness.

*(Enter Prince Single Crop (a fop), accompanied by several ladies in waiting.)*

SINGLE CROP: Your royal highness, we have sought you everywhere. Has this fellow annoyed you?

PRINCESS PROSPERITY: No, indeed, my lord. I fled from the dreadful Boll Weevil, and this kind man offered me his protection.

SINGLE CROP: Well done, good man; take this money (*tosses him some coin, which Diversification allows to fall on the ground, keeping his eyes fixed upon the Princess*). And now, your highness, since I am here you need no longer fear. Pray let me escort you to your mother, after which I shall return and destroy this dreadful creature which has affrighted you.

*(The Princess allows herself to be led away, casting glances at Diversification, who looks longingly after her a moment and disappears.)*

### SCENE 3

*(Speculation enters leading a little lamb by a string.)*

SPECULATION: Silly, silly, ba-a, ba-a,  
Billy, Billy, Bo;  
Come along baby,  
Stand in a row.

What do you think I am, Bo?  
Where do you think we're going?  
We're going to the slaughter pen;  
Hippity, heppity, ho!

*(As they move on, a bear blocks the way.)*

SPECULATION: Jeeminy, Jeminy, look at the beast;  
Billy, oh Billy, oh what a feast.

*(He turns and runs with the lamb in the other direction, when a bull appears.)*

SPECULATION: Better is worse,  
And good is bad;  
Run like the devil,  
Poor Billy, my lad.

*(Rushes between and escapes with the lamb while the Bear and the Bull meet and dance and roll over together on the ground in great glee.)*

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### ACT III

#### SCENE 1

*(Throne Scene—Dance of the Cotton Pickers—King Cotton and his retinue again appear.)*

KING COTTON: We are greatly disturbed at the reports of the damage wrought in our realm by this vicious monster, Boll

Weevil. Our royal guard and our men of science have made fruitless efforts to apprehend and bring him to justice. He has appeared even in the royal garden and has horribly affrighted our Queen and her noble ladies.

Hear, therefore, all my loyal people, this proclamation: We will reward any valiant subject who destroys this monster by granting any request, even to the half of our Kingdom.

LORD COTTON SEED: Your most gracious Majesty, I and the other members of your royal court have decided after consulting together to offer you all of our resources in order that sufficient means may be provided to prosecute the war against this vicious intruder into the royal realm.

KING COTTON: We thank you, noble friends, for this generous offer, and it is gratefully accepted. Our Prime Minister has but recently explained for our comfort what our own resources are: The total of these for the year 1919 are \$1,200,000,000, and while this amount in ordinary times is quite sufficient for all of the needs of our realm, we fear that in this troubled period our needs will far out run our private resources.

What amount, Lord Cotton Seed, may we count upon from you and our other loyal and generous friends?

LORD COTTON SEED: We have already consulted our men of finance, sire, and they have tabulated for us the following report, based upon the value of our products during the last fiscal year:

Cotton Seed	\$340,470,000	Cotton Seed Hulls	\$ 11,095,000
Cotton Seed Meal	\$119,030,000	Cotton Seed Oil	\$209,688,000

And in addition to these, your Majesty, our noble friend, Mr. Pro Duce More, desires to place at your disposal the sum of \$250,000,000, which has been paid him as salary for producing crops in your realm during the last year. The experiment station reports show that the average profit made through his efforts in increasing yields, amounts to approximately 250 per cent.

KING COTTON: We are deeply touched by this renewed evidence of the loyalty of our noble friends. We are likewise highly gratified to know that you have prospered so well in our kingdom. It is only yesterday, good friend Cotton Seed, since thou wert poor and unknown, and by thine own merit thou hast become one of the greatest factors in our kingdom, contributing much to our wealth and blessing and enriching all who have dealings with thee.

And so likewise our friends Hulls, Meal and Oil. What wonderful development has marked their short careers, and not only we, but our entire population owe them a debt we can never repay, but which must increase with the coming years.

And then our friend, Mr. Pro Duce More, what a friend in need is he! We have long since learned to lean upon him for help in every difficulty. May his strength ne'er grow less.

*(Suddenly in the distance is seen Princess Prosperity fleeing, closely pursued by Boll Weevil. He has pursued her nearly to the throne—the crowd looking on in horror, when out from the people rushes a noble looking youth, clad as a farmer, who attacks Boll Weevil with a grass blade, and after a struggle, pins him to the earth.)*

*(The crowd now gathers around the pair.)*

KING COTTON: Speak, Youth, what is thy name, and what thy greatest desire, for it is our royal will that thou shalt be abundantly rewarded for thy valiant defense of our beloved Princess.

THE YOUTH: My name, sire, is Diversification, and your most loyal subject, whose chief desire is to destroy not only this vicious beast but all other enemies of your gracious Majesty.

KING COTTON: Nobly done and nobly said, Diversification, but we shall not be content until we have fittingly rewarded this valorous exploit. Speak; what in all our realm wouldst thou have?



DIVERSIFICATION: Sire, there is in all your realm only one object which could completely satisfy my desire, and if I but dared hope that I have found favor in her sight, I would dare even your royal displeasure by suing for her hand.

*(He advances toward Prosperity and kneels before her.)*

KING COTTON: What say you, daughter? Our royal word has been given. What sayest thine own heart?

*(Prosperity takes Diversification by the hand, he rises and embraces her. The farmer's garb, in some mysterious or magical manner, falls from Diversification and he stands revealed as a handsome prince.)*

KING COTTON: What magic wand hath wrought this wondrous charm?

PRINCE DIVERSIFICATION: The magic of love and service, your Majesty; for he who serves well must be moved by a great love, and every great love finds its expression in service; and these twain by an alchemy which no other can imitate transform the lowliest in your Majesty's dominion into the noblest prince.

KING COTTON: Words fitly spoken, my dear Prince, and "like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

But explain thyself more fully. Art thou a kinsman of that noble Prince Diversification who was long my dearest friend and most trusted prime minister?

PRINCE DIVERSIFICATION: Even so, Your Majesty, his only son.

KING COTTON: Is it possible? But circumstantial reports of thy death and that of thy noble father in a terrible accident were made to us these many years ago.

PRINCE DIVERSIFICATION: These reports, your Majesty, were false. My noble father was secretly slain by Lord Tenant System, your present Prime Minister, and I escaped a similar fate only through the faithfulness of my old nurse, who fled with me to foreign lands. There under her tender ministrations I grew to be a man, and have learned from her the full story of my father's fate and the infamy of his murderer.

*(Lord Tenant System, who has appeared very uneasy, now begins to edge away from the crowd.)*

KING COTTON: Ho, Captain of the Guard, arrest this foul murderer.

*(The Captain of the Guard, after a short chase, arrests Lord Tenant System and leads him before the King.)*

KING COTTON: Base murderer that thou art, what punishment can atone for thy foul deed! It is our order that this infamous creature be cast into our darkest dungeon, and that ere the cock shall crow he be hanged by the neck until he is dead. And furthermore that his son, Lord Single Crop, be banished from our kingdom forever.

*(Captain of the Guard leads both away.)*

SPECULATION: Fair is foul,  
And poor is rich.  
Sooner or later  
We're all in a ditch.

KING COTTON: Take heed, fool, or thou shalt be the next

SPECULATION: Fools may die,  
But over night  
Comes another  
In like plight.

KING COTTON: Thou speakest oft like a wise man, and we pardon thee for thy present folly, but beware. *(Fool skips aside with a laugh.)* And now, my dear Prince, we shall place upon thee the responsible duties of the high office of Prime Minister and in thy keeping the happiness of our lovely daughter. Long may Diversification rule in the realm of King Cotton, attended always by Prosperity.

*(Dance of the Spinners.)*

#### FINALE

*Singing of Dixie by the entire company.*





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